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# THE MUSICAL PUBLIC AND ITS OPINIONS

By REGINALD GATTY

## THE PUBLIC AND THE COMPOSER.

WILL it be conceded that music, as indeed any art, is an appeal to the emotions through the intellect? The æsthetic significance of a work of art is popularly expressed by such epithets as ‘sublime,’ ‘beautiful,’ ‘inspiring,’ ‘pathetic,’ or their antitheses. The public, who use them, would be at a loss to define them with any certainty, although never questioning the reality of the mental impressions for which these epithets stand. On a closer examination it would seem that they fall into two classes expressing the general qualities of beauty or emotion. Many works, such as those voicing moods of tranquillity or sprightly charm, are what we should call ‘beautiful,’ but hardly ‘emotional,’ while, on the other hand, the “Sonata Appassionata” or the “Pathetic Symphony” are, as their names imply, works of distinctly emotional significance. It would, however, not be out of place to apply the terms ‘sublime’ or ‘beautiful’ to these last-named or other works of their class, and it may be doubted if any work can be ‘emotional’ without being also ‘beautiful’ or ‘sublime.’ Is then ‘beauty’ a universal quality of art and ‘emotion’ an occasional supplement?

In literature, if not in music, we find the special classes of satire, comedy and farce, which would seem to be neither emotional nor beautiful, but ministering rather to our malignant instincts. Now the psychologist pronounces the constituents of the mental makeup to be ‘feelings’ and ‘thoughts,’ and on this assumption the sense, or appreciation, of beauty, as distinct from the thought of it, must be a species of feeling. So, too, must be the sense of satire, comedy and farce. Further, it will be observed that music classed as emotional is only emotional in the sense of showing emotional stress and it is a fact of common knowledge that emotion is not always at high pressure. There can be a mean level of emotion, and it would therefore appear that this is what we mean when we speak of a mood, say, of tranquil beauty or sprightly charm. Moreover it will be evident that the qualities of comedy

and farce are of the same nature. While satire and invective will inflame the passions of the crowd, these others pleasantly ruffle the surface of our feelings till we laugh with delight, but make no pretension to stir the sleeping depths. Taking the word 'emotion,' then, in this wider sense, we see that the sublimity and beauty of music are really emotional, and that music is an appeal to the emotions.

Moreover this appeal is made through the intellect. We imply this fact when we speak of music as being easy or difficult to 'understand', and we expressly recognise it when we submit our children and music-students to a course of mental training on the subject, not only indirectly through the study of pieces on an instrument, but directly through the study of the construction of such pieces in theory-classes. We may start then with the definition that music is an appeal to the emotions through the intellect.

Emotions may be strong or weak, intellects may be keen or dull, and the musical public will fall into classes accordingly. The emotional susceptibility, whether great or small, of any individual would seem to be inborn and not amenable to artificial training. Everybody is emotional more or less, but it is convenient to apply the terms 'emotional' and 'non-emotional,' according as the susceptibility is above or below the mean. On the other hand the intellectual capacity of any individual is of a progressive nature, and the chief function of education is the development of the intellect, resulting as regards any special subject, in the two well-marked classes of the trained and the untrained. We thus get four classes of the musical public:—

- (a) trained emotional
- (b) " non-emotional
- (c) untrained emotional
- (d) " non-emotional.

Music appeals to the emotions through its sounds which are combined by the intellect with this end in view. The special combination of sounds in a piece of music gives us the 'form' of that piece. Musical form is thus primarily an intellectual product. It is, of course, only a means to an end, for the end is the emotional appeal, but inasmuch as the force of this appeal will depend entirely on the manner in which it is made, the form of a work is clearly of the utmost importance.

Music may be classed as good or bad according to the 'moral' effect of its emotional appeal. The test of good music may be said to be its sincerity and earnestness, for trivial and blatant

music is assuredly bad. On the other hand it may be so 'dry', that is, so wanting in any emotional significance whatever, that it is emotionally neither good nor bad. It is in fact not much more than mechanical juggling with sounds, and can hardly be dignified with the name of music at all. Music may also be classed as simple or complex according to the demands it makes on the intellect. Both simple and complex music may, of course, be emotionally either good or bad, and both may also be classed as either good or bad according to the technical success with which its emotional significance is conveyed by means of its form.

To compose or understand complex music is clearly the prerogative of the trained musician, that is, the musician whose intellect has been properly developed. Intellectual development, as I define it, consists in greater powers both of synthesis and analysis. Synthesis means breadth of survey, analysis apprehension of detail. As applied to music breadth of survey means a strengthened musical memory, so that the sense of proportion, as regards duration of sections, and the sense of contrast, as regards the use of key, mode, melody, harmony and rhythm in the sections, are active in dealing with a work of large dimensions. The musical form that is dependent on synthesis I will call 'synthetic form,' and its importance will be obvious when we consider how often the beauty of a piece has been marred by the insertion of injudicious passages or the omission of appropriate ones. The length of a piece is purely a question of synthetic form. One may say that the shortest piece may be too long and the longest piece may be too short, if the principles of synthetic form are ignored. Apprehension of detail means a sharpened faculty of observation, so that the sense of contrast as regards the time-value of notes and as regards the use of key, mode, melody, harmony and rhythm in any single section, are on the alert in dealing with that section. The musical form that is dependent on analysis I will term 'analytic form.' It need hardly be said that analytic form is no less important than the other, since the force of the emotional appeal of a single section depends entirely on the manner in which it is made, and the force of the emotional appeal of the whole work is aided or handicapped thereby.

Moreover to compose or understand simple music is really also the prerogative of the trained musician. On the face of it much training would not seem to be necessary to compose or understand a hymn-tune or a dance, and certainly no trained powers of synthesis are required, for the dimensions of simple music are so small that any ordinary untrained intelligence can

easily grasp them. If, however, there is no trained power of analysis, any monotony of note-duration value, of key, note, melody, harmony and rhythm will be but vaguely recognised by the ear, which will accordingly fail to perceive that the work is structurally bad. Further, since the synthetic form is so simple, the force of the emotional appeal is almost entirely dependent on the technical success of its analytic form, and if this is bad the emotional appeal, however good 'morally,' will be weak.

We can now get a clearer appreciation of the four types of the musical public. The trained emotional musician is the ideal type to which the best of us can but hope to approximate. The trained non-emotional musician is the pedant, the man of keen intellect but few sympathies, who is constitutionally insensible to beauty and emotional stress, and who is consequently satisfied with any work or art, provided its intellectual features, that is, its form, meet the requirements. It follows that he prefers complex to simple works, and is in fact generally rather contemptuous of the latter. The untrained emotional musician is either the uncritical enthusiast, who is intellectually unable to grasp the full emotional significance of a work, whether complex or simple, but whose sympathies respond at once to the isolated beauties of phrase, harmony or figure which it contains: or he is the average patron of popular music who is too careless and impatient to listen for the isolated beauties which he might understand of a complex work. The untrained non-emotional musician is merely the untrained pedant.

The influence of the pedant and the strain of pedantry inherent in each of us are responsible for much confusion as regards the estimate of any particular work, and even as regards the true end of music—the emotional appeal. Thus music, whether simple or complex, when written by the trained, non-emotional musician, the 'schoolman' or pedant, is of the 'dry' species already defined, which is emotionally neither good nor bad. If we are trained musicians, however, the sense of intellectual capacity frequently has the unfortunate effect of turning our heads so that when we hear a piece of complex dry music we wrongly attribute the pleasure we derive from our ability to understand it, to the emotional significance of the music itself. Again, Sir Hubert Parry, in his article on "Form" in *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, writes that in some works of painting (with which Programme Music is compared) a painter "trusts rather to the stirring nature of his subject than to its composition to engage and delight the beholders, while in a portrait or picture of less vivid interest the element of

composition, following generally and easily recognised principles, would be of vital importance." Now it will be seen that two alternative principles of art-criticism are here tacitly adopted: if the subject be stirring enough then its composition is of secondary importance, but if the subject is of 'less vivid interest' (or shall we say 'dull'?) then the composition is of vital importance. But the composition of a work of art (that is, its form) is only a means to an end: the end is the emotional appeal, the æsthetic impression made on the public by means of the subject, musical or otherwise, and if the subject be dull the work has failed in its purpose and the most finished composition will not save it. There is only one type of art-patron to whom it can appeal—the trained non-emotional type, represented by the pedant.

We may now notice that the difference between classical and popular music is partly a question of synthetic form. Classical music is complex and popular music is simple, so that the trained musician can follow both, but the untrained musician can only follow the latter. The difference, however, is also partly a question of analytic form, for the bulk of popular music is written by partially trained musicians with a faulty analytic sense, and it is therefore 'bad' in the sense of being amateurish or illiterate, quite apart from the quality of its emotional appeal, which may be good or bad. On the other hand the emotional appeal of popular (simple) music is not necessarily inferior to that of classical (complex) music, provided it is not marred by any defects of analytic form. Hence Brahms could say of Johann Strauss's waltz, "An der schönen blauen Donau," 'Would I had written it!'—always a disconcerting pronouncement to the pedant who can only value a work by the amount of synthetic skill that it shows.

The varying critical estimates of the musical public may now be contrasted as follows. A complex work of perfect construction may be voted dull for two reasons: either because it really is so, or because the hearer is untrained and has not the patience to listen for the isolated beauties of phrase or figure, which he is alone capable of appreciating. That is why the sonata form is considered dull by the average amateur. Include such a phrase, however, in the melody of popular song and it will be played by every barrel-organ and whistled by every butcher's boy in the town, as I noticed two or three years ago in connection with a striking phrase recalling the opening bar of the *Allegro* of Beethoven's Violin Sonata in F major, op. 24 (*Frühlings-Sonate*). Again, a simple work of perfect construction may be voted dull, either because it really is so, or because the hearer is a pedant who has

not got the musical feeling necessary to appreciate its emotional significance.

As regards works of faulty construction we find the following estimates. There are many great complex works which show defects in this respect, but the latter are not felt to be bad enough to outweigh the desire of musicians to study and hear the works. On the other hand, as already stated, the great bulk of popular music shows defects of analytic form, and it is rightly pronounced bad, but it is for this reason, and not because of its simplicity. Sometimes, indeed, such music is trivial or blatant in its emotional significance, and then it is bad in a double sense. Generally, however, a piece of popular music will be found to have at least one isolated phrase or turn of melody, whether original or imitative, of real emotional power. The crowd, who make it popular, rightly appreciate this feature, but their dull senses fail to realise the overflowing defects of analytic form which make the piece as a whole seem monotonous and poverty-stricken to the alert senses of the highly trained musician. Nevertheless, the judgment of the untrained public is not less sincere, or less sound, as far as it goes, than that of the trained expert, and it is only pedantry on the part of the latter to deny beauty to a phrase merely because it occurs in a faulty piece of simple music. As well might one dispute the sensuous beauty of musical sound itself. I remember a well-known British composer once decrying the lines "Oh, how joyful will that meeting be," etc., of the favourite revival hymn, although the same phrase forms one of the beauties of the no less favourite Brahms-Joachim Hungarian Dance in E minor. True, it is possible he would have denied any beauty to the dance. Again, I was recently involuntary auditor to some young fellows bawling out a commonplace sentimental tune in 3rds, with faulty intonation, no light and shade, and heavy slurs from one note to the next. While my own senses were dumbly protesting I overheard a young girl say to her companion, "Doesn't it sound lovely?" and I had to admit that the performance from her uncritical standpoint was a complete artistic success.

We must now notice how the co-existence of the four estimates of the four classes of art-public implies the existence of a collective estimate. This is essentially impersonal in nature, as it is derived from the estimate of them all, a consensus of opinion being obtained by the elimination of all partial conflicting estimates. Needless to say the number can be but small of works which survive the test of general scrutiny and receive unanimous approval. Discounting the passing influences of prejudice and fashion, which

no one can entirely escape, and which will operate day by day and year by year in each of us—most notably, perhaps, in the revulsions of feeling due to satiety—the various estimates will cancel and reinforce one another in the following manner. The pedant, trained or otherwise, equally pronounces for all works of satisfactory construction: the uncritical enthusiast for all works of emotional significance. Emotional works of unsatisfactory construction are rejected by the pedant and non-emotional works of satisfactory construction are rejected by the uncritical enthusiast. The two therefore only agree in accepting emotional works of satisfactory construction. These again are the only works accepted by the trained emotional musician, and so form a small collection of approved works selected from the whole artistic output of the time by the collective estimate of the musical public. Notice how this estimate remains strictly impersonal. Once we begin to refer it to the individuals who contribute towards it we are back again in the varying estimates of the four classes, and we find that it is only the estimate of the trained emotional musician which corresponds with the collective estimate of the musical public.

#### THE PUBLIC AND THE CLASSIC.

Alongside these new approved works we find the monuments of the art, known as ‘classics’, which have been handed down to us from the past, and which we will now more closely consider. These works equally receive the general approval of the art-public, which will evidently be derived from the estimates of the four component classes as before. The word ‘classic’ may be used in connection with any art, and we may here note that every art will have its four classes of art-public, and its collective estimates regarding the output in the same way that music has. Now the collective estimate of to-day will clearly be but a repetition of the collective estimate of yesterday. Indeed it is only owing to the favourable collective estimate of one generation that the classics are submitted to the next generation for renewed consideration. Clearly, too, these corroborative estimates may be traced back to the time when the first collective estimate was reached, and this was the moment when, after the works first became generally accessible, the four sections of the art-public became sufficiently acquainted with them to form their estimates. The first collective estimate of the classic therefore differs in no wise from the first favourable collective estimate of any new work, and the latter

will consequently in the course of time also become a 'classic', and as such, form part of the heritage of masterpieces bequeathed by the past.

Despite passing aberrations of opinion, due to prejudice and fashion, we may take it as certain that the collective estimate of the classics is a final one. It is absurd to suppose that the position of Homer, for instance, after the lapse of over two thousand years, is otherwise than secure. But we have seen that to-day's estimate of Homer is but a corroboration of the first collective estimate ever made on him. The collective estimate of a new work will therefore be equally final. That is to say, under ordinary circumstances, we may suppose that the four classes of the art-public will become sufficiently familiar with sufficient works of any productive artist during the first few years after their becoming accessible for the final verdict to be definitely established in the world. It is not the less final because it is only the first general estimate to come into existence, nor because the halo of classicism may not yet have been conferred, nor because it is only to be seen through a confusion of conflicting partial estimates. Hence, except for the disturbing influences of prejudice and fashion, which, it must be admitted, have in some cases operated with tragic cruelty, the final estimate as to the significance of any creative artist is already in being during his lifetime.

We see from this that it is a mistake to suppose that a great lapse of time is necessary for the true appreciation of the classic. Nevertheless it is held, both that he is sometimes only first appreciated by a later generation than his own, and that the appreciation of a productive artist must be sustained for a considerable time before he can be accepted as a classic. Thus, to take the first case, the Germans claim the credit of first recognising Shakespeare, despite the testimony of Dryden and such eighteenth-century writers as Pope and Johnson. But Shakespeare was notoriously popular during his lifetime, as witness the unauthorised publications of the quarto editions. The four sections of the art-public had therefore every opportunity of forming their contributory estimates towards a collective estimate of his merits. That the subsequent estimates of Dryden and others were partial, is true, but they receive undue prominence owing to the fame of their writers and to the fact that they are in print. We know nothing of the unprinted estimates of those times, and are we to suppose that Shakespeare was studied by so few members of the art-public that only these partial estimates were in being during that period? We may rather believe that the latter were merely

contributory to an actual collective estimate and that the hundreds of readers of the Rowe, Pope, Johnson etc. editions of Shakespeare, to say nothing of playgoers, supplied the missing estimates of the printed critics for the formation of a favourable collective estimate. The case of Bach would seem more to the point but for the fact that the nineteenth-century extension of his publicity is not the same thing as the first creation of a collective estimate: it merely connotes derivation of that estimate from a wider geographical area. We may be sure the collective estimate of Bach has subsisted unbroken in Leipsic from his generation to our own. Even if he had, for some reason, been for a period totally neglected and forgotten, one could not speak of the first creation of a collective estimate on his revival. It could not be more than the renewal of that estimate after an interregnum.

We come to the second belief, that the appreciation of a productive artist must be sustained for a considerable time before he can be accepted as a classic, and this independently of the exceptional cases duly noted, that may arise from the chances of prejudice and fashion. Speaking of literature, and, *mutatis mutandis*, the same reasoning will apply to music, or any productive art, Dr. Samuel Johnson, in the preface to his edition of Shakespeare's plays gives (London edition of 1768 p. vi *seq.*) the rationale of this belief as follows:

To works, however, of which the excellence is not absolute and definite, but gradual and comparative; to works not raised upon principles demonstrative and scientific, but appealing wholly to observation and experience, no other test can be applied than length of duration and continuance of esteem. What mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared, and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favour. As among the works of nature no man can properly call a river deep or a mountain high, without the knowledge of many mountains and many rivers; so in the productions of genius, nothing can be styled excellent till it has been compared with other works of the same kind. Demonstration immediately displays its power, and has nothing to hope or fear from the flux of years; but works tentative and experimental must be estimated by their proportion to the general and collective ability of man, as it is discovered in a long succession of endeavours. Of the first building that was raised it might be with certainty be determined that it was round or square, but whether it was spacious or lofty must have been referred to time. The Pythagorean scale of numbers was at once discovered to be perfect; but the poems of *Homer* we yet know not to transcend the common limits of human intelligence, but by remarking, that nation after nation, and century after century, has been able to do little more than transpose his incidents, new name his characters, and paraphrase his sentiments.

The reverence due to writings that have long subsisted arises therefore not from any credulous confidence in the superior wisdom of past ages, or gloomy persuasion of the degeneracy of mankind, but is the consequence of acknowledged and indubitable positions, that what has been longest known has been most considered, and what is most considered is best understood.

And of Shakespeare he says (p. viii):

He has long outlived his century, the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit.

First, however, let us note, that the distinction which Johnson draws between works resulting from 'demonstration' and works 'tentative and experimental' is that between the products of 'exact science' and of 'art,' as we should term it. A large field of science is however, 'inexact,' and yet serves as a sound basis for practise. Thus, although physiology is inexact, the practise of medicine is substantially derived from it. "The Origin of Species" is a work of inexact science, and yet the doctrine of evolution may be said to stand or fall by it. We may still hope, therefore, to establish a sound theory of musical opinion, such as I have attempted to do in the preceding pages, and not depend on empirical observations as Johnson would have us do, in confining us to the test of 'length of duration' and 'continuance of esteem.'

Now in deriving the estimates of the musical public from general principles it was simpler to ignore the mental process involved in forming them. We see, however, that Johnson considers the 'reverence due to writings that have long subsisted,' or works that survive the test of 'length of duration' and 'continuance of esteem,' that is to say, to the classics, to be the result of the frequent examination and comparison of such works together. In other words, the reason why the appreciation of a productive artist must be sustained for a considerable time before he can be accepted as a classic is because during that period his works must undergo the test of frequent examination and comparison with acknowledged classics. We must therefore inquire how the process of examination and comparison is involved in the formation of the estimates of an art-public.

Now the process of forming an estimate is undoubtedly compounded of this act, and clearly the test may be as regards the emotional appeal or as regards the form. Let us see how it is applied, and first as regards the emotional appeal. It is a fact of psychology that consciousness of a sensation, or feeling, can only be the result of comparison. A brain that received only one

uniform sensation would not be conscious of it. Thus our consciousness of any colour is due to the fact that there are other colours or shades of the same colour with which it can be compared, and similarly as regards our consciousness of any sound. In the same way the seven diatonic notes of a key have each a special emotional significance in that key. This significance is, however, only realised by regarding any such note as belonging to that key. The note E, for example, has by itself no emotional key significance. Regard it, however, as the mediant of a key, or 'me,' and it immediately assumes the emotional significance of 'tranquillity.' Regard it as the dominant, or 'soh,' and we are conscious that it has a 'trumpet-like,' 'bold' significance, and similarly if it is regarded as any other note of that key. Now in considering a note as belonging to a key we are mentally bringing it into relation with the other notes of the key, that is, we are mentally comparing its sound to the sounds of the other notes. Thus the mediant 'me' has a 'calm' effect in comparison with the effect of the tonic, 'doh,' or the dominant, 'soh,' and so on. Now we must carefully note that the emotional significance of any sound of a key in relation to another is the subjective aspect of a relationship of definite physical vibrations, and as such is ultimate and *unchangeable*. As easily may we suppose that our subjective sensations of 'red,' 'blue,' or any other color, are liable to change. We must, of course, discount the temporary impression superinduced by satiety or the force of association. Thus sounds, sights, smells, etc., experienced by the individual on some great or affecting occasion, may assume for him a special significance that takes long to wear off, but this significance is not recognised by humanity in general. The emotional relation of 'me' to 'doh' therefore does not alter because we subsequently find that the emotional relation of 'fah' to 'doh' is a different one. The distinctive qualities of sounds cannot be accurately defined in words, but they are indisputable, and their general key-characteristics have been named as follows:

*Tonic:* 'doh': firm: restful: satisfying: conclusive.

*Supertonic:* 'ray': (low) prayerful.  
(high) rousing: stirring: exciting.

*Mediant:* 'me': calm: tranquil: placid.

*Subdominant:* 'fah': desolate: awe-inspiring: grave: serious: dull:  
flat: unfinished.

*Dominant:* 'doh': bright: bold: martial: trumpet-like.

*Submediant:* 'lah': sad: mournful: melancholy: plaintive:  
touching: sorrowful: pensive.

*Leading-note:* 'te': (low) expectant.  
(high) piercing: urgent: expectant: 'tone  
sensible.'

I have given the complete list because here we have the basis of the whole emotional, or æsthetic, significance of music. Any piece of music is made up of the sounds of a key, or keys, and the total complex, emotional, or æsthetic, significance of the whole piece is consequently compounded of the emotional, or æsthetic, values of the contributory co-operating sounds as tabulated above. It will further be clear that, as the significance of the constituent notes is immutable, so, too, is the significance of the compound production. The "Dead March" in "Saul" is solemn and sad, both in intention and effect: this is, and always will be the collective estimate of musicians. Whoever, then, finds it merely 'tedious,' or 'dull,' or 'ineffective' is either influenced by the prejudice of satiety, etc., or else stands condemned, *ipso facto*, as a non-emotional musician.

The emotional significance of a work will, therefore, remain the same, to whatever other piece it may subsequently be compared. If, for instance, it be valued at *a*, this value is not affected because a generation later some other work is produced, the emotional significance of which is found by comparison to be *b* or *c*. Comparison, therefore, serves to give us the *relative* emotional values of works, but cannot affect their absolute values, which remain unchanged. The question then arises, will the collective estimate accept a work the value of which is *a*, but discard it when subsequently a work with the value of *b* is produced? The answer must be 'no'; for a work is only accepted because it answers to a particular mood and that mood is still there to be satisfied, even when other moods have been appealed to in later works. This statement is important enough to need a paragraph of justification.

Just as the emotional susceptibility, whether great or small, of any individual would seem to be inborn and not amenable to artificial training, so the emotions of humanity would appear to be just the same to-day as they have ever been. The growth of civilisation is merely a process of intellectual development, so that the emotions are checked and diverted from their primitive outlets by hitherto unexperienced inhibitions, and, owing to the altered, more refined, circumstances of daily life, are no longer roused in the same ways. An emotion is, however, not necessarily less

strong because its outlet is not the violent action of the barbarian: it is either dissipated or held in restraint: and if a modern woman cannot stay in the theatre to witness the murder of Desdemona, as has occurred to my knowledge, her antipathy is at least as great as the fierce joy with which presumably a Shakespearean audience hailed the catastrophe. All literature and painting is based on the assumption that the emotions remain essentially unchanged. Johnson says of Shakespeare (*ib.* p. xii.):

His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that *Rome*, like every other city, had men of all dispositions; and wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him.

In the opening chapter of 'Waverley' Sir Walter Scott writes that the force of his narrative depends

upon the characters and passions of the actors;—those passions common to men in all stages of society, and which have alike agitated the human heart, whether it throbbed under the steel corset of the fifteenth century, the brocaded coat of the eighteenth, or the blue frock and white dimity waistcoat of the present day.

He continues still more explicitly:

Upon these passions it is no doubt true that the state of manners and laws casts a necessary colouring; but the bearings, to use the language of heraldry, remain the same, though the tincture may be not only different but opposed in strong contradistinction. The wrath of our ancestors, for example, was coloured *gules*; it broke forth in acts of open and sanguinary violence against the objects of its fury. Our malignant feelings, which must seek gratification through more indirect channels and undermine the obstacles which they cannot openly bear down, may be rather said to be tinctured *sable*. But the deep ruling impulse is the same in both cases; and the proud peer, who can now only ruin his neighbour according to law, by protracted suits, is the genuine descendant of the baron, who wrapped the castle of his competitor in flames, and knocked him on the head as he endeavoured to escape from the conflagration. It is from the great book of Nature, the same through a thousand editions, whether of black-letter, or wire-wove and hot-pressed, that I have venturously essayed to read a chapter to the public.

James Anthony Froude writes in "Oceana", Chapter XIV:

A library is always part of the stock of a modern ocean steamer. There are religious books . . . there are books of travels . . . The great proportion are novels . . . After all I had to fall back on my own supply, Homer and Horace, Pindar and Sophocles. These are the immortal lights in the intellectual sky, and shine on uneffected by the wrecks of empires or the changes of creeds. In them you find human nature, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. These great ones are beyond the

power of Fate, and no intellectual revolution can shake them from their thrones. I have sometimes thought that the human race has passed its spiritual zenith, and will never more bring forth kings such as they.

Let us apply this to music. It is certainly true that the development of music has brought with it the discovery and use of new combinations and progressions, etc., which give works an emotional significance not obtained before, and on first hearing them in new pieces we are liable to be carried away for a time, especially as the older pieces lack the whet of novelty. Thus after hearing the brilliant orchestration of Berlioz for the first time small wonder if even a Beethoven symphony sounds 'old-fashioned' and dull to the student. Nevertheless such an impression can be but temporary, for the real emotional significance of Beethoven is not affected one iota by whatever Berlioz or any other later composer may do. Comparison, it must be repeated, will give us the *relative* emotional values of works but cannot affect their absolute values which remain unchanged. If this were otherwise, indeed, there would be no permanent basis for æsthetic criticism whatever, whereas, as a matter of fact, the thousand-year-old plainsongs of the Early Church are as beautiful to-day as they ever were, and so, too, the masses of Palestrina, and the fugues of Bach. A striking corollary of this position is that the primary materials of music are still as vital to the art as the latest additions. The "Dead March" in "Saul" and the "Freude" theme of the Choral Symphony are pure diatonic melodies, as simple as any plainsong, while Wagner attained some of his sublimest effects, as in the Valhalla theme, by the use of common chords and their inversions.

If the test of comparison is as regards the form and we condemn works with faults of construction partly for this reason we are merely applying the footrule of the pedant, since the form is only the means to the end. Now there is a particular danger in this in dealing with historical works. The development of an art is at bottom the development of its form, whether analytic as in the discovery of new combinations and progressions, or synthetic, as in a clearer and wider sense of construction. Seeing that the emotions have remained unchanged the classic works of early periods may therefore be expected to show defects as regards the form, but not as regards the emotional appeal, and these defects will clearly be a proportionate obstacle to the force of the appeal. They do not, however, arise from negligence or illiteracy, like the defects of bad popular music, but are incidental to a striving after a more intellectual medium of expression. Fundamentally,

therefore, the form will be sound and the emotional appeal will on the whole be adequately conveyed. It will, however, be relatively simple; hence, when compared with the more complex, less imperfect form of a later work the pedant will be apt to reject it as inadequate. Once again we see that the only true test is not one of comparison but is solely that of the absolute emotional appeal.

No doubt productive artists of early periods may subsequently suffer from partial eclipse on this account, as we see the quartets and symphonies of Haydn neglected for those of Beethoven, but Haydn is not therefore less of a classic than Beethoven. In the same way the emotional significance of another early classic, Henry Purcell, is recognised, despite the hindrance of a still more primitive form. With the multiplication of cheap editions, of musical societies, orchestras, and music-followers, such partial neglect will gradually dwindle away, but in the early days of less organized civilization it was very marked, even as regards acknowledged masters. Thus on hearing of a projected French translation of Chaucer, Dryden wrote in the preface to his "Fables" (1700) ". . . . it makes one think that there is something in it like fatality; that, after certain periods of time, the fame and memory of great Wits should be renewed, as Chaucer is both in France and England. If this be wholly chance, 'tis extraordinary; and I dare not call it more, for fear of being taxed with superstition." No doubt in many cases such neglect has been unwittingly taken for a final verdict and it is one of the many duties of the present and immediate future to go through the storehouses of art and rescue such works as may rest in unmerited oblivion.

We see then that Johnson is in error in ascribing the 'reverence' due to the classics as the result of frequent examination and comparison, and in supposing that the reason why the appreciation of a productive artist must be sustained for a considerable time before he can be accepted as a classic is because they must undergo this test. Why then, as a matter of fact, is the rank of classic never conferred on the living, but only after a lapse of time on the dead?

It will be noticed that Johnson speaks of the 'reverence' as due to the classics. In the same place (p. vii) he says of Shakespeare that he "may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of established fame and prescriptive veneration." To confer on a man the rank of the classic is thus more than a purely critical act, for 'reverence' and 'veneration' are emotional

processes. Again, recognition of the classic is more than the favourable verdict of any one art-section of the public: it proceeds from the whole world and we see that the 'reverence' and 'veneration' paid to the classic is the tribute of humanity in general to one of its greatest men. Thus the reputation of Shakespeare is not merely maintained by the literary and theatrical publics, but by laymen, who bring no technical knowledge to bear on the question. It is based, indeed, not only on a critical estimate, but also on a dogma of æsthetic faith, so that to criticise a classic will not infrequently raise the charge of artistic blasphemy. Now two things are required to meet this idea of classicism. The first is universal publicity, so that not only the art-section (and this is not of one town, but the world) contributes its favourable estimate, but also the general public adds its share of uncritical homage. The second is the sense of dignity and remoteness, which is the prerequisite for the emotion of reverence and veneration. This only the past can give after all waves of controversy and personal feeling have completely subsided. To fulfill both these requirements time is required, and Johnson's estimate of a hundred years may be taken as sufficient for the purpose.

We have already analysed the collective estimate of the art-public. It here remains to notice that when the three partial classes acknowledge the classicism of an artist they are unconsciously reinforcing their partial estimates by the dogma of æsthetic faith. The impersonal nature of a collective estimate has also been duly emphasised. It need only be added that in the case of the classics it is also subscribed to by the layman, who contributes no critical opinion at all but merely an accepted dogma. It is therefore an error to suppose that a classic is better judged because he is a classic. Individual opinion is no less varied to-day than it has ever been, and this is particularly in evidence when we come to define the merits of some particular masterpiece, or to pronounce on the authenticity of a doubtful one.

Elsewhere Johnson points out (p. viii) that "approbation, though long continued, may yet be only the approbation of prejudice and fashion," and we have already taken into account the temporary warpings of a collective estimate from this cause. In the same passage he denies that the collective estimate can ever be more than relatively final, because "human judgment, though it be gradually gaining upon certainty, never becomes infallible." This, however, is to deprive the word 'certainty' of its meaning as generally understood, and to question the assumptions on

which all our reasonings and actions in life are based. A collective estimate may therefore be taken as absolutely final.

Next, Johnson considers (p. viii) that the "peculiarities of excellence" by which "Shakespeare has gained and kept the favour of his countrymen" to be that he is "the poet of nature" and "holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life." "Nothing" he says, "can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature." But if this were entirely true a verbatim report of a murder case would be equal to the tragedies of "Othello" and "Macbeth." All the same, the end of art being the emotional appeal, the strength of that appeal will clearly be hindered by anything that is untrue to life. If a character falls out of his rôle he seems unnatural: the spectator is no longer moved; he speculates. We find a parallel case in much meretricious music. A hymn-tune cheek by jowl with a waltz may be such an unnatural change of emotion that we can only wonder instead of yielding to it. We feel that it is untrue to our emotional life. This is where Meyerbeer went astray. Or again, the emotional significance of sounds may be so strangely mixed that the resultant emotional significance of the whole piece has no counterpart in our emotional nature. Much modern music errs in this respect.

Lastly Johnson says of Shakespeare (p. ix) that "his real power is not shown in the splendour of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable, and tenour of his dialogue; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations, will succeed like the pedant in *Hierocles*, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen." The reader will observe that this is a recognition of the perfection of Shakespeare's synthetic form, to which the merits of his analytic form can only be contributory.

Is the final estimate of an artist the same as his reputation? This depends on what we mean by the word. Reputations admittedly rise and fall and these fluctuations are undoubtedly largely due to the influence of fashion. This is particularly the case with paintings, for we cannot suppose that the æsthetic value of a picture can vary with the vagaries of the auction-room. On the other hand there is a reputation due to the written estimate of the press. The press-critic is really spokesman for one or other class of the art-public and the collective estimate is therefore derivable from the written estimates of critics, provided, of course, they are sufficiently representative of the four classes. These estimates have, however, this special significance that they

bring far wider publicity than mere word of mouth, and so contribute towards that ultimate world-wide publicity, which, in an appropriate case, crystallises into the recognition of a classic. Besides this there is also a reputation due to an unwritten estimate, which, if sufficiently representative, will be equally final with the representative written estimate, and will, of course, harmonise with it, the only difference being that it is more limited in the extent of its publicity. This unwritten estimate will also be found in the case of works that have, for some reason, escaped the notice of the professional critic. Its operation is especially noticeable in connection with the stage. Prominent actors have, of course, the reputation of written estimates, but how did they ever get the chance of attaining such reputation? Long before this period, at the beginning of their careers, they attracted the attention of stage-managers, producers and fellow-actors by their intelligence shown in 'walking-on' as 'extra' people. This led to their understudying small parts, and this in its turn to their playing small parts and understudying big ones. Thus they gradually won for themselves a genuine reputation based on unwritten estimates, so that they were picked out, as the occasion arose to play leading rôles.

If further proof be needed that the final estimate is in being as soon as a representative art-public has the means of judging, we have interesting corroborative testimony in the case of reproductive artists in general, who, if they cannot establish their reputations during their professional careers cannot hope to do so at all. The final estimate which acclaims the greatness of a singer, pianist, conductor or actor is necessarily that of a limited art-public, for the art-public of the whole world cannot, in the nature of things, hope to share in forming it, let alone any member of that public in future generations after the artist is dead. Are we then to believe that if this could be done the estimate might be reversed? The only answer can be that though the estimate be of a limited art-public, nevertheless, apart from the accidents inseparable from the nature of human life, it is sufficiently representative and as truly a final collective estimate of artistic achievement as that which, century after century, acclaims the ancient classic monuments of creative art. The progress to classicism may therefore be summed up as follows. Probably during an artist's lifetime the final verdict is already in being, although derived from only a more or less limited section of the art-public, and after a hundred years it has become not only the final verdict of the whole art-public but also a dogma of æsthetic faith.

## THE PUBLIC AND THE PERFORMER.

In dealing with the musical public and its opinions we have hitherto confined ourselves to estimates regarding composers, that is, 'creative' or 'productive' artists and their works. It now remains to extend the survey by considering the special features that apply to 'exponent' or 'reproductive' artists and their performances.

The primary object of reproduction is to voice the emotional appeal of a work, and this will depend on the two factors known as 'execution' and 'interpretation.' 'Execution,' or 'executive technique' means physical control over the organ concerned, whether voice, hands, or lips, and 'interpretation', or 'interpretative power' means the æsthetic application of this technique in performance. The end of 'excution' is twofold: firstly, to secure the maximum beauty of sound produced, secondly, to secure the maximum ease in such production. The end of 'interpretation' is adequately to voice the emotional appeal of the work. The study of 'execution' is consequently primarily a physical question, whereas the study of 'interpretation' is a question of gaining intellectual insight into the form. In the case of conducting the executive technique as a purely physical operation is of course nil. The two faculties are entirely distinct. A reproductive artist may be a good executant and bad interpreter, or vice versa, and in practise only the very few are equally supreme in both directions.

Now we have seen that intellectual development is needed to appreciate the full emotional significance of a work, and it will similarly be necessary to appreciate the intellectual insight which we term interpretation. It is, however, also necessary to appreciate execution. The particular form of development required in the latter case is not synthetic but analytic: it consists of a keen apprehension of detail, resulting from sharpened powers of observation, so that the quality of sound produced and the smoothness of production, as the result of physical control, delight the ear in proportion to their excellence. The greatest executants consequently set up an ideal standard of tone-quality and ease with which the execution of other artists may be compared. The exercise of such comparison also serves to train the analytic power of the observer's ear. The best discipline in this respect, however, is undoubtedly the practical exercise of each and every reproductive art, at least in the rudiments, for it will be found that reproductive students need as much training on these points as on the purely physical side. Untrained pianists have a 'hard touch,'

that is, they produce a hard tone, and untrained violinists produce a scratchy tone. In the same way the voices of untrained singers, as of untrained reciters and actors, are 'throaty' and thin. In all these cases, too, the sounds are not rounded off, resulting in what singers call 'slurring,' and they fluctuate spasmodically in volume. The quality and amount of organ-tone are out of the player's control, except for special effects, but in return the mechanical equality of sonority and volume give this instrument its peculiar characteristic, and it is of salient importance that the sounds should be carefully rounded off. The result is that untrained organists play with a muddled tone because the accurate precision of key-depression and elevation necessary for good sound-production is not duly appreciated. Similarly the orchestra of an untrained conductor plays with a hard, scratchy, muddled, thin or blaring tone, as the case may be, and the balance of tone is ill-defined. Moreover in each case the performer is generally unconscious of his defects until he has learnt how to hear them.

As regards the execution of reproductive art we find sixteen theoretical classes of the musical public. In the first place there are those who delight in the mere beauty of sound or otherwise. These may be termed sound-emotionalists or sound non-emotionalists. These again may be divided into those whose analytic sense is developed as regards execution, or otherwise, and who may be called executive-observant or executive-nonobservant. These four classes may again be divided into those who delight in the ease of sound-production or otherwise, who may be termed virtuoso-enthusiasts or virtuoso-nonenthusiasts, and these may further be executive-observant or otherwise, giving a total of sixteen classes.

When we come to consider the classes of the musical public as regards the interpretation of reproductive art, we find that there will be four. A work of art being an appeal to the emotions through the intellect it results as we have seen in four classes of the musical public. Interpretation being intellectual insight into the emotional appeal of the work performed, or, otherwise expresses an appeal to the emotions of the hearer through the intellect, it is a counterpart to the nature of the art-work itself, and as such will result in four parallel classes of the musical public. It happens, indeed, that there is no field for the powers of the non-emotional trained or untrained musician (the pedant). Reproductive art is not stationary, but progressive, and the intellectual insight, or interpretative powers, of the performer can only be measured by the greater or less success of the emotional appeal. It cannot be

put down on paper and analysed with a measuring tape and so it is lost on the pedant. We see then that altogether there are sixty-four theoretical classes of the musical public as regards reproductive art.

It would manifestly serve no purpose to attempt to consider them in detail, but the following general observations may be made with regard to a large mixed audience hearing some great reproductive artist. He can clearly only be appreciated as an interpreter by the trained emotional musician. On the other hand as an executant he will delight two types of auditor: the sound-emotionalist, who melts at the sensuous beauty of the musical tone, and the virtuoso-enthusiast, who thrills at the easy control of *bravura* passages. The two sides of reproduction, interpretation and execution, are supplementary, not mutually exclusive, but at the same time it generally happens that those who appreciate one side are apt to underestimate the other. Perfection of execution is of course a fundamental requirement of reproductive art, since execution is the means of communication between artist and auditor, and consequently a certain minimum of tone beauty and ease is necessary for the trained emotional musician, otherwise the want detracts too much from the force of the emotional appeal. On the other hand the actual operation of delicate muscular adjustments so easily stimulates our visual and auditory nerves that some of us are readily filled with admiration and wonder to the detriment of the emotional appeal, and the actual operation of a beautiful vibrating tone may equally have the same effect.

It will be clear that in the same way as with productive art, so with reproductive art the co-existence of the numerous classes of the art-public implies the existence of a collective impersonal estimate. That this estimate, although of a limited public, is nevertheless sufficiently representative of the different classes to be a final one will be equally clear. If it be not so, indeed, then, as already pointed out, the reputations of the great reproductive artists of the past must be considered as open to perpetual doubt, a position that lacks all support from biographers in general.

In conclusion we must briefly consider the question of the personality of the artist as affecting the æsthetic impression on the hearer. It is sometimes described, perhaps not without warrant, as 'magnetic influence,' and we even hear of a great performer 'hypnotising his audience,' when the implication would seem to be more than the facts justify. If such be indeed the case, the method is grossly illegitimate and the results worthless.

The whole subject of mental interference, however, is still very obscure, and due regard must be had for the influence of self-delusion and exaggeration. On a sober estimate we can perhaps allow that a self-assured demeanour and the visible signs of intense concentration on the part of the performer will predispose an audience in his favour by subconsciously inducing a mood of trustful submission to his authority, but nevertheless not to the extent of paralysing their critical, that is, their receptive faculties.